



NEWS

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas **L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Board Approves Ridley-Thomas' Request to Explore the Possibility of Implementing Cost-Effective 'Instant Run-off' Elections

According to the County's of Los Angeles' Registrar Recorders' Office, last Tuesday's special election was estimated to cost the County \$2.2 million

LOS ANGELES COUNTY – The Board today approved Supervisor Ridley-Thomas' request to direct the County's Registrar-Recorder's Office to report back on the costs associated with conducting special elections to fill vacant partisan and non-partisan, local government, legislative and congressional seats over the past decade.

The recent special election for the 26th District Senate seat vacated by the election of Mark Ridley-Thomas to the Board of Supervisors was the fifth election in little more than a year, in which County residents have been asked to participate. Yet another election involving the top finishers in each party will be needed to decide the senate winner.

"This many elections are needlessly costing taxpayers millions of dollars and contributing to `voter fatigue,'" Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. "This results in lower voter turnout, which is antithetical to representative government and is ultimately corrosive to a vibrant participatory, democracy."

According to the L.A. County Registrar-Recorder, just over six percent or 23,631 of the 390,409 registered voters in the senate district participated in the

special election, which cost taxpayers \$2.2 million. The Supervisor believes an “instant run-off voting system is a reasonable, cost-effective solution” to voter fatigue.

The report will include options, including the feasibility of moving to instant runoff voting in partisan and non-partisan special elections, available to the board and recommendations for legislative proposals to reduce election costs and voter fatigue.

Instant runoff voting combines primary and runoff elections into one by having voters list from one to three their preferences for each office that is up for election. If a voter’s first ranked candidate is eliminated, his or her vote goes to the voter’s second candidate as the runoff choice. The runoff rankings are used to elect a majority winner (50 percent, plus one) in a single election.

“The recent election results should give proponents of Instant Run-off Voting additional ammunition to make the case for election reform,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. “We may have an opportunity to bring the technology currently available to us to address the issues of election fatigue, cost and low voter turnout in a manner that reinforces democratic participation.”

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